

INDOCHINA

(Section 9, page 15, of 15 April draft of
"DCI's Speech for State Governors.")

9. Indochina. The question of Indochina, as we all are aware, has many complex factors. It is a military battle being fought at Dien Bien Phu, in the Tonkin Delta, in Laos and Cambodia, and in the rice-growing areas of the south. It is a political issue, involving delicate questions of relations between France and the Associated States, and on the other side, between Ho Chi Minh and his masters in Moscow and Peiping. And above all, it is an international issue of the highest importance in the world balance of power. Here in Indochina the Western proposal for united action meets directly with Communist ambitions to dominate all of Asia.

In the short time we have here today, it is not possible to discuss each phase of this intricate problem. So, let me say simply this.

However heroic the battle of Dien Bien Phu and whatever may be its outcome, the big issue of Indochina is not military but political. Geneva, and not Dien Bien Phu, is the arena where the truly large issues will be decided.

In their attitude toward Geneva, we have reliable information from many sources, including the Communists themselves, that Moscow and Peiping do want a cease-fire. The principal reason, I believe, is that they are afraid that a

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hot war, in Indochina or in Korea, may produce the spark that could set off World War III - the war that by no means could they hope to win at this time.

The question is, what price will the Communists pay themselves, and ask from the West, for a cease-fire and a settlement in Indochina. As usual, their initial bargaining position is impossibly high, and it is my brother's task, I say with some relief, to whittle them down to an equitable give-and-take at Geneva. Most certainly this will not be done this week or this month. It took two years to achieve a firm truce in Korea, and given the Communists' ^{stubborn} attitude and the more complex practical problems of Indochina, the outlook for a quick settlement is hardly more optimistic.

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